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rectness of drawing, truth of detail, and absence of convention, the best artistic characteristics of photography, are qualities of no common kind, but the student who issues from the academy with these in his grasp stands, nevertheless, but on the threshold of art. The power of selection and rejection, the living application of that language which lies dead in his paint-box, the marriage of his own mind with the object before him, and the offspring, half stamped with his own features, half with those of nature, which is born of the union—whatever appertains to the free-will of the intelligent being, as opposed to the obedience of the machine,—this, and much more than this, constitutes that mystery called Art, in the elucidation of which photography can give valuable help, simply by showing what it is not. There is, in truth, nothing in that power of literal, unreasoning imitation, which she claims as her own, in which, rightly viewed, she does not relieve the artist of a burden rather than supplant him in an office. We do not even except her most pictorial feats—those splendid architectural representations—from this rule. Exquisite as they are, and fitted to teach the young, and assist the experienced in art, yet the hand of the artist is but ignobly employed in closely imitating the texture of stone, or in servilely following the intricacies of the zigzag ornament. And it is not only in what she can do to relieve the sphere of art, but in what she can sweep away from it altogether, that we have reason to congratulate ourselves. Henceforth it may be hoped that we shall hear nothing further of that miserable contradiction in terms “bad art”—and see nothing more of that still more miserable mistake in life “a bad artist.” Photography at once does away with anomalies with which the good sense of society has always been more or less at variance. As what she does best is beneath the doing of a real artist at all, so even in what she does worst she is a better machine than the man who is nothing but a machine.

Let us, therefore, dismiss all mistaken ideas about the harm which photography does to art. As in all great and sudden improvements in the material comforts and pleasures of the public, numbers, it is true, have found their occupation gone, simply because it is done cheaper and better in another way. But such improvements always give more than they take. Where ten self-styled artists eked out a precarious

living by painting inferior miniatures, ten times that number now earn their bread by supplying photographic portraits. Nor is even such manual skill as they possessed thrown out of the market. There is no photographic establishment of any note that does not employ artists at high salaries—we understand not less than 1*l.* a day—in touching, and coloring, and finishing from nature those portraits for which the camera may be said to have laid the foundation. And it must be remembered that those who complain of the encroachments of photography in this department could not even supply the demand. Portraits, as is evident to any thinking mind, and as photography now proves, belong to that class of facts wanted by numbers who know and care nothing about their value as works of art. For this want, art, even of the most abject kind, was, whether as regards correctness, promptitude, or price, utterly inadequate. These ends are not only now attained, but, even in an artistic sense, attained far better than before.

The colored portraits to which we have alluded are a most satisfactory coalition between the artist and the machine. Many an inferior miniature-painter who understood the mixing and applying of pleasing tints was wholly unskilled in the true drawing of the human head. With this deficiency supplied, their present productions, therefore, are far superior to anything they accomplished, single-handed, before. Photographs taken on ivory, or on substances invented in imitation of ivory, and colored by hand from nature, are all that can be needed to satisfy the mere portrait want, and in some instances may be called artistic productions of no common kind besides. If, as we understand, the higher professors of miniature-painting—and the art never attained greater excellence in this country than now—have found their studios less thronged of late, we believe that the desertion can be but temporary. At all events, those who in future desire their exquisite productions will be more worthy of them. The broader the ground which the machine may occupy, the higher will that of the intelligent agent be found to stand. If, therefore, the time should ever come when art is sought, as it ought to be, mainly for its own sake, our artists and our patrons will be of a far more elevated order than now: and if anything can bring about so desirable a climax, it will be the introduction of Photography.

## MISSAL ILLUMINATIONS.

WE have received, says the *Athenæum*, “proof-sheets of the fac-simile of a Litany of a MS. of the fourteenth century, now in the old Royal Collection, British Museum. The borders are rich with dragons grinning through leaves, and playful angels busy with the violin, with hairy baboon fiends, and saints in difficulties praying to ‘Mary Mother.’ Pushing aside the prickly branches of this quaintness and looking in, you find yourself in quite a little Paradise world of pious, simple thought, and tender shrewdness. In this group, kneeling under the glory, and before the angel swinging the silver thurible, fragrant with incense, are women’s faces exquisitely beautiful, their dove-like eyes looking out of the pretty environment of hood and wimple such as Chaucer’s soft-hearted Lady Abbess wore. Here, in the variegated arch of the letter R, are a crowd of mitred bishops and mailed and surcoated knights—here a Virgin Mother pressing her bosom against the Child-God’s mouth, with a motherliness that the childless men loved to imagine. All sorts of pleasant quaintnesses we catch sight of. Moses, for instance, with no rays of glory, but veritable cow-horns, and they crumpled withal; St. John the Baptist using a large stone cup font for his missionary purposes, and sworded angels driving leap-frog souls into the fanged jaws of a great hell monster; St. Paul somersaulting over his horse’s mane, to the great surprise and indignation of some mace-bearing and visored men with blazoned shields, such as Blue Mantel could never have seen this side Tarsus—real fourteenth century executions; girt-up anxious man with short, heavy sword, clawing the head-dress of a kneeling, praying malefactor, a hooded man as witness; but especially, we delight in a Holbein sort of Last Day, with shrouded men in their full death-linens, pushing up their coffin-lids at the sound of the angels’ trumpets. A very amusing personage, too, is St. Margaret (how maidenly and sweet she is) praising God from between the thorny wing and bossed body of a dragon, who looks on with a sort of irresistible shy benevolence, with his yard of red tongue out, like a tired greyhound.”